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Revising the State Minimum Admission Requirements

Role of HECB in college admissions

- State law directs the HECB to establish minimum admission requirements for students seeking to enroll in the state's public four-year colleges and universities
- The board adopted the current requirements in 1988
- Since then, the preparation required for college success has intensified and college admission has become more competitive

Admission requirements are important to students and schools

- State minimum admission requirements should provide a clear path for high school students to follow in preparing for college
- Research shows that rigorous academic preparation in high school is the best predictor of whether a student will enroll in college and earn a bachelor's degree

Why the HECB is proposing new minimum admission requirements

- The state's current minimum admission requirements are outmoded
  - The current requirements are significantly lower than the actual requirements of many universities
- Too many recent high school graduates are not prepared for college-level work, especially in math
  - Nearly 40 percent of students who go on to college within a year of high school graduation must enroll in remedial classes, primarily in math

Proposed requirements reflect collaboration and feedback

- The proposed admission requirements were drafted, in close consultation with colleges and universities, and with feedback from K-12 education and business leaders
- Public four-year college presidents and provosts reviewed, revised and approved the draft requirements
- The HECB is holding five public hearings in April and May to solicit public feedback

Key recommendations for freshmen entering college in summer 2008

- Require four credits of mathematics, with at least one credit in the senior year of high school
- Require two credits of laboratory science, one of which is algebra-based
- Require three credits of academic core coursework in each year of high school
- Eliminate the college Admissions Index, which ranks students based on GPA and test scores

Mathematics

Current Requirements

- Three credits of math, including algebra, geometry, and intermediate algebra (or integrated math I, II, and III)

Proposed Requirements

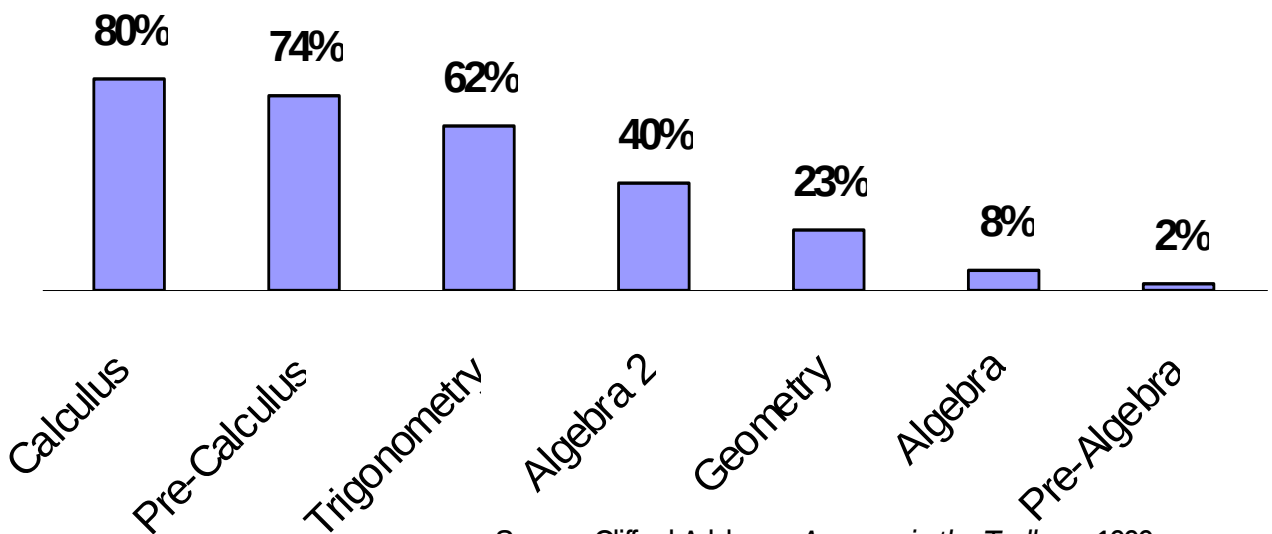
- Four credits of math, with at least one credit completed in the senior year
  - Students could earn one math credit by taking an algebra-based science or statistics course
  - Students who complete pre-calculus would be considered to have met this requirement

Why?

- One in three recent high school graduates who enrolls at a state public college or university requires remedial coursework in math
- The new requirement would help students develop the pre-college math skills they need to succeed in college
- National research shows that the level of math a high school student completes is the most important predictor of whether he or she will earn a bachelor's degree

Math achievement directly affects college success

Percentage of high school graduates who earn bachelor's degrees based on the highest level of math studied in high school



Source: Clifford Adelman, *Answers in the Toolbox*, 1999.

Science

Current Requirements

- Two credits of science, including one credit of laboratory science

Proposed Requirements

- Two credits of laboratory science, of which one credit would require the student to understand and use algebra

Why?

- Students would develop stronger scientific reasoning skills and apply their math abilities in a broader academic environment

Academic core coursework

Current Requirements

- None

Proposed Requirements

- Three credits of academic core coursework in each year of high school, including senior year

Why?

- Too many students “coast” through their senior years and then take remedial courses in college.
- The new requirement would ensure that students are engaged in rigorous academics through the senior year

Admissions index

Current Requirements

- Achieve a minimum score on college Admissions Index, which ranks students basely solely on GPA and test scores

Proposed Requirements

- Eliminate the college Admissions Index

Why?

- The index's heavy emphasis on grades discourages many students from taking rigorous courses that might lower their overall GPAs

Other features

- The proposed requirements support K-12 education reform: students who pass the WASL would fulfill the first two credits of high school math and English
- Colleges would maintain the flexibility to admit students – up to 15 percent of each freshman class – who do not meet the minimum requirements
- Colleges could require additional preparation for students seeking freshman admission
- No change to the current requirements in English, foreign language, social science, and the arts

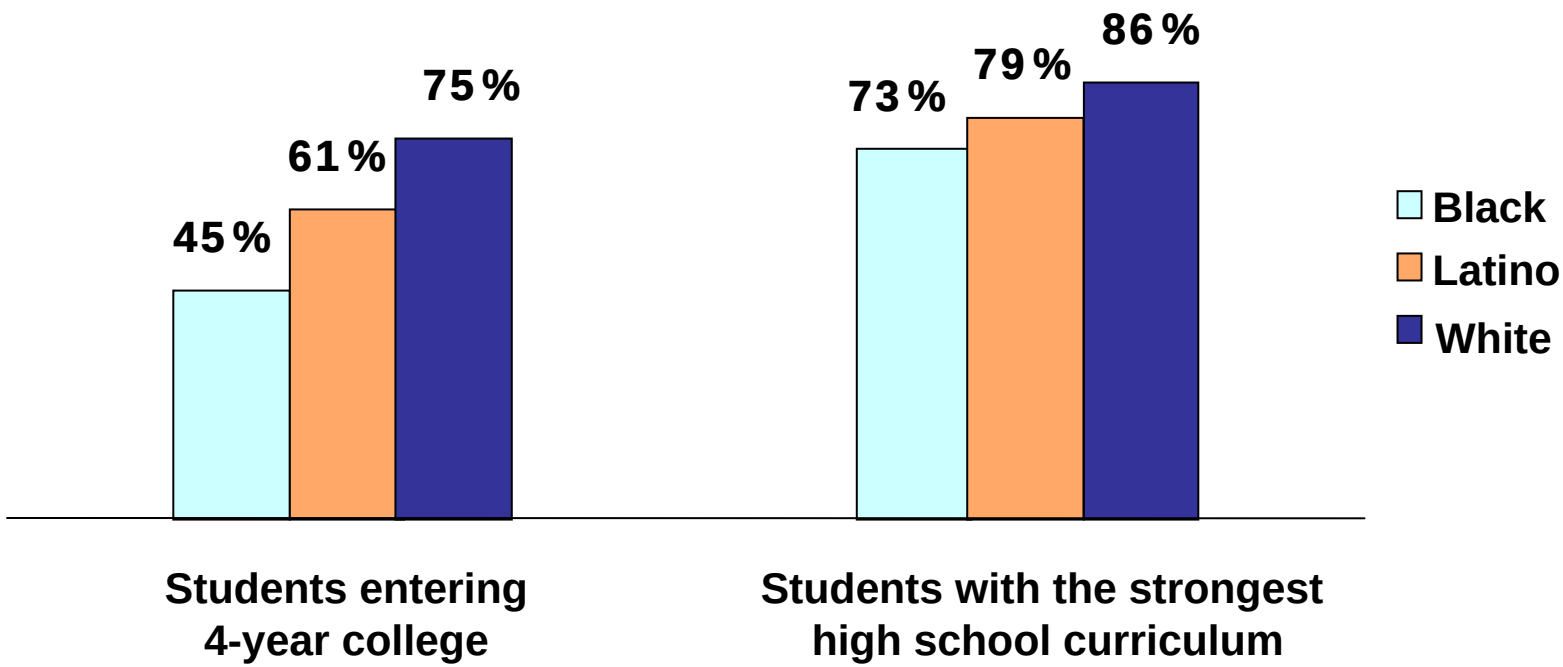
What about students from disadvantaged backgrounds?

- Increasing academic core course requirements helps students from ALL backgrounds

- Students from a low socio-economic status are the least likely to take academic core coursework beyond the minimum requirements

Rigorous curriculum = Real opportunity for ALL students

Bachelor's degree completion rates for high school graduates



Next steps

- The HECB is holding five public hearings:
  - **April 7**, 4-6 p.m., WSU Riverpoint Campus, Spokane
  - **April 12**, 3-5 p.m., Highline Community College, Des Moines
  - **April 19**, 4-6 p.m., Central Washington University, Ellensburg
  - **April 25**, 4-6 p.m., Tacoma Community College
  - **May 3**, 4-6 p.m., WSU Vancouver
- The HECB will make a final decision in summer/fall after considering public testimony

We welcome your feedback

We will be accepting written comments through May 20. Please submit comments to Patricia Shorb:

By Mail

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